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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
Washington, DC 20515

7 November 2005

The Honorable Norman Mineta  
Secretary  
c/o Docket Management Facility  
US Department of Transportation  
400 Seventh Street, SW, Nassif Building, Room PL-401  
Washington, DC 20590-001

RE: OST Docket No. 2005-22114

Dear Secretary Mineta:

I realize that the Department of Transportation proposal to move certain Indiana counties into the Central Time Zone is not a congressional decision, but I wanted to make you aware of the terrible mistake that will be made unless the petition for a time zone change filed by St. Joseph County, Indiana, is rejected.

I represent Elkhart and Kosciusko Counties, which have not petitioned for a zone change, but are closely following the Daylight Saving Time issue. The social and economic interests of these counties are directly tied to St. Joseph County, Indiana, which has petitioned for a change to Central Time, and the counties of southern Michigan which are located in the Eastern Time Zone.

This entire region is highly integrated, and the residents of all jurisdictions move routinely from state to state and county to county. Many Michiganders work and shop in the northern tier of Indiana, and vice versa. Consequently, it is very important that the counties of Elkhart, Kosciusko, and St. Joseph remain in the same time zone as one another, and in the same time zone as their neighbors in Michigan. Permanently dividing such an integrated region would negatively affect the long-term economic growth of the entire region.

A recent survey conducted by the Chamber of Commerce of St. Joseph County found that 91% of respondents believe that St. Joseph and Elkhart Counties should remain in the same time zone due to the nature of the regional economy. By not filing a petition to be moved into the Central Time Zone, Elkhart and Kosciusko Counties have clearly stated

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their preference for Eastern Time. Even had they petitioned, they would have been denied because they fail to meet even minimal criteria for the Central Time Zone. Moreover, since it is obvious that a majority of Michiana's counties are in, and wish to remain in, the Eastern Time Zone, it is imperative that St. Joseph County also remain in the Eastern Time Zone so that a damaging and economically detrimental split of the region does not occur.

It makes no sense for St. Joseph County to stick out as a Central Time Zone island, surrounded by a sea of Eastern Time Zone. While the City of South Bend certainly maintains ties to Chicago, they dwarf in comparison to the economic, social, and family ties going north, east, and south.

On a personal note, I lived in South Bend while attending the University of Notre Dame. My wife is a South Bend native, and her family operated a small chain of grocery stores in South Bend for many years. My close ties to the region lead me to believe that there is neither unanimous nor overwhelming support for moving St. Joseph County into the Central Time Zone among residents, businesses leaders, media, churches, or any major group.

As the Department of Transportation begins its hearings, I urge you to carefully consider every aspect of this sensitive issue. If you have any further questions, please contact Mark Pfundstein of my staff at (202) 225-4436.

Sincerely,



Mark E. Souder  
Member of Congress